DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 244 845 SO 015 111

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TITLE	The Model U.N. Program: Teaching Unreality. A United Nations Assessment Project Study. The Heritage Foundation Backgrounder No. 282.
INSTITUTION	Heritage Foundation, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	Aug 83
NOTE	15p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) -- Viewpoints (120)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Bias; Capitalism; Civil Liberties; Conferences; Developed Nations; Developing Nations; Disarmament; Food; Higher Education; High Schools; *Instructional Materials; *International Relations; Peace; Population Growth; Program Evaluation; Simulation; *World Affairs; World Problems
IDENTIFIERS	Middle East; *Model United Nations Program; New International Economic Order; New World Information Order; South Africa; *United Nations; United States

ABSTRACT

An evaluation of the instructional materials used by high school and college students who participated in the Model United Nations Program showed that the program is uncritical of the United Nations (U.N.) and biased against the United States and the West in general. These materials are strongly promoted by many prominent educational professional organizations. Examples of some of the biases found follow. The core curriculum being taught through the materials is the New International Economic Order (NIEO), which teaches that capitalist nations are exploiting poorer nations and that the solution to this exploitation is the massive redistribution of wealth from the developed nations to the Third World. There is no analysis of the internal problems of developing countries. Other curricula support the U.N. continual condemnation of Israel and South Africa, never mentioning PLO terrorist activities, the training of Angola troops by Soviet advisors, or the extensive U.N. funding of Marxist guerilla groups. Other areas of bias were found in the way the materials treated population, food, disarmament, U.N. peacekeeping, and human rights. A balanced program in international affairs is urgently needed. (RM)

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The Heritage Foundation Backgrounder

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A United Nations Assessment Project Study

ED244845

August 11, 1983

THE MODEL U.N. PROGRAM: TEACHING UNREALITY

RECEIVED
SEP 29 1983

INTRODUCTION

As high school and college students return to class this fall, another cycle of Model United Nations conferences will be starting. The mock United Nations has become a very popular event, involving over 50,000 students yearly in over 2,000 U.S. schools. At these schools, the Model U.N. program introduces young Americans to the U.N., one of the world's most important multinational bodies.

Yet there is considerable evidence that the young participants in the program are not being taught the full truth about the U.N., its role in the world, or its impact on the United States. Instead, students are being led to believe that the structure, practices, and issues of the U.N. accurately reflect global reality. The students are not being taught that on many key issues the U.N. distorts reality and even exacerbates tensions. The fact that many U.S. public schools are not presenting a balanced picture of the U.N. is very serious. It raises questions about how carefully parents and school officials monitor what takes place in their schools' Model U.N projects.

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There is shocking unreality in the U.N. roles faithfully acted out by the students playing delegates from the United States, the USSR, Great Britain, East Germany, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, and the whole cast of 158 U.N. member states. As they re-create the debates and speeches of the U.N. General Assembly, the special political committee sessions, and the forums of specialized agencies like UNESCO, the students are led to believe that the East-West conflict and the battle between the values of the free world and those of communist world somehow have abated and are now replaced with the "North-South Dialogue." The students find themselves in the frustrating world of the U.N.'s one-nation, one-vote protocol, where the free nations of the West (which pay over 65 percent of the total U.N. budget) are constantly vilified by the undemocratic

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governments of tiny nations whose only claim to notoriety is often their radicalism and their U.N. membership.

The students find themselves accepting uncritically the U.N.'s "through the looking glass" distortion of language and the application of the U.N.'s double standard. Young Americans, for instance, are being gently persuaded by their Model U.N. that Israel and South Africa are pariahs, that Israel is just about the sole cause of Middle East tensions, that free enterprise is the cause of poverty in developing countries, and that "The New International Economic Order" (NIEO) is the only acceptable strategy of economic development. NIEO, in fact, is the core ideology of the U.N. today, calling for a mandatory transfer of goods, technology, resources and knowledge from the industrial to the developing nations.

A close look at the Model U.N. program, as it is played in thousands of American schools every year, reveals that the NIEO is its hidden agenda. That school boards and parents want this to be taught by the Model U.N. is questionable. What is needed, it would seem, is increased parent, community and teacher attention to the actual content and message of the Model U.N.

THE UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION AND THE MODEL U.N.

By far the most important promoter of the Model United Nations simulations is an organization known as the United Nations Association of the U.S.A. The UNA has a network of 250 chapters and divisions nation wide with 24,000 members. In addition, UNA works with 130 other national organizations. It carries out its Model U.N. and Youth Program through 115 Model U.N. conferences nation wide. UNA is also the official coordinating body for the National U.N. Day program, including celebrations arranged with governors and mayors in 1,200 American communities.

The UNA works closely with and co-publishes Model U.N. materials with the National Education Association (NEA). Also linked to the UNA are educational service organizations with a combined membership of almost 2.4 million. They include the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the National Council for Social Studies, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the National Association of High School Principals, the National School Boards Association and Global Perspectives in Education. According to Gail Reiss, program director of UNA's Model U.N. and Youth Department, the UNA works through a variety of "civil, national and religious organizations" to deliver the Model U.N. program to students, teachers and community organizations throughout the U.S. Reiss herself works closely with the Foreign Policy Association and writes the "U.N. Supplement" for its annual "Great Decisions" manual on foreign policy designed for social studies teachers.

Reiss pointed out to The Heritage Foundation that UNA does not "sponsor" any of the Model U.N. conferences. UNA rather sees

its function as a resource bank, training center and internship program for refining and nurturing the Model U.N. Conference. This it does quite well. A Heritage Foundation survey of 25 Model U.N. programs nation wide, including the National High School and College Model U.N.s in New York and the large annual Harvard University Model U.N., found that about 72 percent use the UNA "Model U.N. Survival Kit" and/or other UNA curriculum and research materials. Almost 25 percent of these Model U.N.s are run by those closely linked to UNA's Model U.N. and Youth Department.

UNA tends to have a strong influence on the American Model U.N. educational event through two avenues: its research materials, publications on Model U.N. teaching and its UNA backgrounders on U.N. issues; and its intern and Model U.N. training program, which tends to produce the student managers who run the bigger Model U.N. national competitions. UNA really has no rival as a Model U.N. consultant. What is most serious is that no consultant to the Model projects balances UNA by approaching the U.N. from a skeptical or analytically critical perspective.

It is the drama of the Model U.N., the careful acting out of actual U.N. working session protocol, complete, in some cases, with native costumes like Arabic headdresses and Cuban battle fatigues, that makes the Model U.N. fun for students. UNA has filled a vacuum by helping schools dramatize the U.N. version of international diplomacy in as much detail as a Model U.N. group cares to undertake.

UNA hosts an annual "Secretariat Seminar" at its New York City headquarters at the end of the school year in late May. The seminar invites the student Secretaries General of Model U.N. conferences and their advisors from all over the U.S. for a two-day training session on how to run Model U.N. simulations. This year's seminar featured a day of meetings at the United Nations itself, where U.N. officials from the International Labor Organization, the U.N. Human Rights Commission and other agencies addressed the group. The discussion centered on simulating U.N. specialized agencies like the International Labor Organization, UNESCO, and the World Health Organization, in addition to the usual Model U.N. staging of mock General Assemblies and Security Councils. Attendees included about 40 high school and college students and teachers as well as some representatives of state departments of education. Jordan Horvath, coordinator of the UNA Model U.N. and Youth Department, notes that the seminar usually draws about 50 participants.[1]

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[1] The Heritage Foundation was invited to attend this year's Secretariat Seminar by UNA's Gail Reiss, but one week later the invitation was abruptly withdrawn.

THE UNA MODEL U.N. CURRICULUM: THE NIEO

There is a core curriculum for the Model U.N. simulation, though it is not well advertised. It is the same "curriculum" used at the U.N. itself--the "New International Economic Order." NIEO is based on the thesis that the capitalist nations of the world are continuing the colonial policies of the 19th century through the free market economy and through transnational corporations and thus are "exploiting" the poor nations. The NIEO "solution" to this "exploitation" is the massive redistribution of wealth from the developed nations to the Third World. The administration of this wealth transfer is meant to take place through the U.N. specialized agencies.

NIEO is the central theme of many of UNA's Model U.N. research materials. For instance, the UNA booklet, The Global Economic Challenge, suggests the creation of a "soft loan" pool to oil importing Lesser Developed Countries (LDCs). It states that

> With regard to U.S. and other donor country contributions to international development institutions we recommend that donors do not impose conditions on their contributions as to the country or the purpose to which such funds are applied.[2]

The booklet also calls for "creation of some new form of credit instrument" for loans to LDCs with "limited credit risk and longer maturities." The high school pupils reading the UNA booklet are told that the developed nations have a "responsibility" to "distribute equitably" gains from trade--both between countries (foreign aid) and within countries (welfare payments). The booklet fails to mention that these proposals are very controversial and could lead to a planned, semi-socialist global economy outlined in the NIEO. This global economic planning would be paid for by U.S. and Western tax dollars but administered by U.N. managers.

Another UNA booklet for Model U.N. programs strongly recommends that technology be given to Third World Nations. This publication, The Growth of the U.S. and World Economies Through Technological Innovation and Transfers, strongly implies that the U.S. should adopt a U.N. Code of Conduct for Transnationals including "disembodied" technology transfer to LDCs without a corresponding allowance for private investment by Western business firms. While the booklet mentions that only certain Third World "powerhouses," such as Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, Brazil, Mexico and Argentina, have moved into the technological age, there is no attempt to explain that the free market economic policies of these countries--the absolute antithesis to the NIEO--is what has made them economically successful.

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2 Robert O. Anderson, The Global Economic Challenge, Vol. I (New York: UNA-USA, 1978), page v.

There is no analysis of the internal problems that many developing countries create for themselves--such as the socialist and price control policies of a Tanzania. According to many experts, these are the real causes of underdevelopment. The UNA booklet does not tell its student readers that many specialists on economic development fear that NIEO policies could strangle growth and thus sentence a developing country to remain permanently underdeveloped.

THE BIAS IN THE UNA MODEL U.N. CURRICULUM

"Teaching About the United Nations," a UNA manual for Model U.N. teachers and students, illustrates some of the worst bias and blindspots in UNA's (and NEA's) Model U.N. editorial policy. By highlighting the artificial "North-South Dialogue," while largely disregarding the East-West conflict in this booklet and other Model U.N. materials, UNA does students the disservice of covering up one of the major geopolitical realities of the age.

Faithfully described, however, is the U.N.'s concentration on two issues, which are raised in virtually every U.N. forum from the General Assembly to UNESCO. Israel and South Africa. UNA's Model U.N. research materials encourage support for the U.N.'s continual condemnation of these two countries. In today's U.N., the Soviet bloc nations and their allies in the Group of 77, the Third World voting bloc now consisting of over 120 nations, consistently censure the policies of Israel while promoting the policies of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Though widely recognized as a terrorist group, the PLO is never criticized at the U.N. for its terrorist tactics. In addition, PLO indebtedness to the Soviet Union for arms and training is openly admitted by PLO leaders themselves. But the use of the PLO as a surrogate subversive force by the Soviet Union to destabilize Israel and the Middle East is never mentioned at the U.N. Nor is it mentioned by UNA in its Model U.N. publications for students and teachers.

Middle East

The UNA "Guide to Delegate Preparation," designed for briefing Model U.N. students and their teacher advisors, treats "the U.N. and the Arab-Israeli conflict" in an explicitly one-sided manner. Though this may mirror what goes on at the U.N. , it is not an honest guide if it ignores what really has happened in the Middle East. Examples:

*The UNA's five-page summary of the conflict repeatedly points an accusing finger at Israel for "invading" or "attacking" its Arab neighbors. Only once does the UNA handbook mention PLO attacks on Israel.

*The summary is silent about the well-documented PLO record of terrorism. Nothing is said about the unrelenting war that the PLO has conducted against Israel, which not only has included attacks on civilian settlements, but also on Israeli athletes at the 1972 Olympics.

*The words "PLO" and "Palestinian" are used interchangeably. This falsely conveys to American students the impression that the PLO is justified when it claims to be the sole representative of the Palestinian people. The UNA summary presents only the possibility of PLO leadership of the Palestinians. No moderate Palestinian leadership is mentioned.

*When the summary addresses the infamous General Assembly resolution of 1974 that equates Zionism with racism, the UNA authors sanitize it by describing it as a "face-saving device for the Arab nations."

*The summary almost entirely ignores the central issue of the Middle East conflict--the challenge to Israel's right to exist as a sovereign state. Rather, the image of Israel presented by UNA is that of an irritant in the Middle East, supported (for unexplained reasons) by the United States. Nearly all of the summary's attention focuses on Palestinian rights--a legitimate issue, but not to the exclusion of Israel's right to exist as a state.

*The summary faithfully reports a U.N. commission's charges that Israel shows a "disregard for basic human rights," but fails to point out the lack of balance of the commission.

*The summary describes "Israel's lack of cooperation with UNIFIL"--a U.N. force based in Lebanon. Nothing is said about UNIFIL's almost total failure to prevent PLO attacks on Israeli towns.

*The summary is strangely silent about the U.N. allowing refugee camps to be used by the PLO to train terrorists and stockpile arms.

*The summary, without a balancing qualifier, tells of the U.N. Human Rights Commission's charges that Israel is guilty of war crimes.

With such a one-sided presentation of the facts of Middle East events, the UNA surely cannot expect American students and teachers to understand the crisis in that region. On the matter of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the UNA's "Guide to Delegate Preparation" miseducates those participating in the Model U.N. program. It similarly miseducates on other key issues.

Southern Africa

*Here the UNA Guide faithfully lists all of the U.N. anti-apartheid and anti-South Africa resolutions.

*It makes no mention, however, of such critical strategic considerations as the 25,000 Cuban combat troops occupying Angola, the training of Angolan police by East Germans, or the training of Angolan troops by Soviet advisors.

*There is no mention here of the extensive U.N. funding of Marxist guerrilla groups, including the African National Congress (ANC), the Pan African Congress (PAC--actually a Maoist group) and the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO). Both ANC and SWAPO have strong ideological and military ties to Moscow. Since 1975, the U.N. has given at least $130 million to the ANC, PAC, SWAPO, the PLO and other Marxist and Maoist national liberation movements, including the MPLA (now the Marxist government of Angola) and FRELIMO (now the Marxist government of Mozambique).

*Conversely, there is no mention by UNA of the fact that such non-Marxist liberation movements as the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, which now controls large parts of Angola, and the Mozambique National Resistance, now fighting FRELIMO in Mozambique and controlling large areas of that country, including rail lines and transportation routes, receive no U.N. aid of any kind.

The New World Information Order (NWIO)

NWIO, one of the key political debates at UNESCO, is a Soviet bloc inspired strategy, which encourages Third World countries to threaten Western news agencies with expulsion and taxation in order to secure more favorable Western news coverage and increased foreign aid for mass communications from the industrialized Western nations.

*UNA's Guide for Model U.N. delegates exhibits a pro-NWIO bias, for instance, by comparing the NWIO to the Associated Press struggle to break into the international news service cartel 80 years ago when it was dominated by the Reuters and the German Wolff agencies.

*UNA neglects to say that the NWIO, unlike AP, is based on the idea of massive Western aid ($15-$20 billion is the suggested figure) to Third World news agencies. Nor does UNA deem it necessary to note the grave threat posed to press freedom by NWIO under the shibboleth of "protection of journalists" (i.e., licensing of Western newsmen in the Third World).[3]

*No mention is made of the heavy leftist and Marxist bias of the newly formed UNESCO media aid bureau, the International Programme for the Development of Communication, both in rhetoric and in funding approval for Third World mass communication projects.[4]

OTHER CURRICULUM AIDS SUGGESTED BY UNA

Population

In Gail Reiss's "U.N. Supplement," published by UNA for "Great Decisions '83," the social studies guide for teachers

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3 Thomas G. Gulick, "The IPDC: UNESCO vs. the Free Press," Heritage Foundation Backgrounder #253, March 10, 1983, p. 5.

4 Ibid., pp. 1-3.

produced by the Foreign Policy Association, there is a section on population growth under the chapter called "Africa's Economic Squeeze: Poverty, Hunger and Refugees." Reiss's interpretation of what population growth does to the African standard of living is identical to the United Nations view. She says rapid population growth in Africa has "generated imbalances such as growing deficit in food production, shortages in trained people in production and service areas, and rising import costs for energy and food leading to a serious balance of payments deficit."[5] Economist Julian Simon of the University of Illinois, a specialist in population, disagrees. He argues that population density has a positive effect on the rate of economic growth. He finds that population growth in Lesser Developed Countries is, in fact, an attractive "investment" compared to other social investments.[6] Reiss makes no mention of this controversy over the real meaning of population growth. She only parrots the U.N. use of population growth statistics as an excuse for introducing NIEO global wealth transfers.

The Great Decisions series and the UNA annual U.N. Supplement to it are nonetheless highly recommended to Model U.N. actors by UNA.

Food

UNA collaborates with Newsweek magazine in producing Model U.N. resource materials for the classroom. Newsweek helped finance the UNA "Model U.N. Survival Kit" in 1982 and 1983. In turn, UNA promotes the free Newsweek social studies materials among teachers. The NIEO bias of this material is obvious in lesson plans like its January 1982 "Map-of-the-Month" mimeograph entitled: "North vs. South: The Have and Have Not Nations." The lesson asserts, under the heading of "Food," that:

> Approximately 1 billion people suffer from chronic hunger and malnutrition, yet world food production has barely kept pace with population growth.

This is typical NIEO distortion of the true world food situation. Frances Moore Lappe and Joseph Collins, in World Hunger, Ten Myths, show that right now the earth is producing more than enough food to nourish every person on the globe as well as those within the very countries most people associate with hunger and starvation.[7] It long has been recognized that there are causes for hunger other than population growth, such as mismanagement of natural resources and food stocks and economic policies that discourage farmers from producing more than their own food needs. The Model U.N. source materials should reflect the disagreements on this matter.

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5 "Great Decisions '83: U.N. Supplement," (New York: UNA/USA, 1983), p. 14.

6 Julian Simon, The Ultimate Resource (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981), pp. 278 and 285.

7 Frances Moore Lappe and Joseph Collins, World Hunger, Ten Myths, Institute for Food and Development Policy, May 1979, pp. 7-8.

Disarmament

UNA also recommends a new NEA teacher's guide called "Choices: A Unit on Conflict and Nuclear War" as a Model U.N. resource. "Choices" focuses students' attention on the horrors of nuclear war and the notion of deterrence. The need for an adequate U.S. defense to check the Soviet buildup is almost ignored; it is suggested that this is too expensive. Therefore, the favored "choices" offered the student by this booklet emphasize nuclear weapons negotiations. It is strongly implied that the Soviets want disarmament and peace very badly, and indeed have no other "choice." Completely omitted is the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the use of Cuban proxies in Africa and the Soviet buildup in Central America. The fact that the USSR is expanding its nuclear and conventional arsenal is a choice not recognized in "Choices." UNA material on this critical question leaves out a number of contrasting "choices" faced by those concerned about their nation's security, such as the choice to discourage an enemy through a superior defense force.

U.N. Peacekeeping

UNA calls U.N. Peacekeeping operations "the most controversial, the most highly publicized, and in many respects the most constructive and successful of its peace and security activities."[8] In an attempt to substantiate this, UNA offers a woefully inadequate summary of why U.N. peacekeeping activities are so controversial and actually ineffective. For example, in recounting for students the history of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), UNA never alludes to UNIFIL problems such as its inability to control PLO attacks and even its collaboration with the PLO to supply intelligence and explosives to PLO guerrillas.[9] Nor does UNA provide overall analysis of U.N. peacekeeping efforts such as the fact that the U.N. has failed to prevent the outbreak of some 93 armed conflicts occurring between 1945 and 1977. This is despite an expenditure of at least $3 billion ($1 billion contributed by the United States) of U.N. funds on peacekeeping since the U.N. founding.[10]

Human Rights

Another U.N. research leaflet recommended for Model U.N. students is entitled "The U.N. and International Human Rights Instruments." This four-page summary gives flattering portraits of such U.N. documents as "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights" of 1948, of which it says:

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8 "Guide to Delegate Preparation" (New York: United Nations Association, 1982-83 edition), p. 10.

9 Roger A. Brooks, "U.N. Peacekeeping: An Empty Mandate," Heritage Foundation Backgrounder #262, April 20, 1983, pp. 14-15.

10 Ibid., pp. 1-2.

> Experts consider it an authoritative interpretation of the human rights provisions of the U.N. Charter, as well as of customary international law. In this respect, it has attained a degree of legal importance.[11]

UNA does not say, however, that the U.N. record on human rights has been widely criticized for its double standard. Students are not told that the U.N. ignores human rights violations against the freedoms of speech, press, assembly and religion in the USSR, Cuba, Mainland China, the Eastern bloc, Vietnam, and other communist-run countries.[12]

THE MODEL U.N. GAME IN ACTION

The Heritage Foundation attended several "mock United Nations" organized for high school and college students.

Background

Model U.N. simulations have become something like the world of school sports competition over the last 35 years. There are local, regional and national meetings. A high school or college with the funds for travel, which gives academic credit to student players, may send students to attend several Model U.N. events during the school year. Usually any school can participate in any Model U.N. event if it submits an application.

The real competition lies in getting desired country assignments. The best roles to play are the USA, USSR and other major countries. These assignments go to the schools with a good Model U.N. track record. Awards are given to the best schools at each event, while top individual performers become Secretaries General and committee chairmen at future conferences. The main criterion for excellence--for schools and for individual students at Model U.N. conferences--is the ability to portray countries and U.N protocol as faithfully as possible.

This places the student within the severe limitations of the United Nations itself. Though this leads to frustration, teachers generally assume it is for the best and that the student is learning about the real world of international diplomacy. The problem is that the U.N., with its tedious, grinding sessions couched in NIEO rhetoric, does not mirror the real world. The NIEO world view, expressed always at the U.N. as the North-South Dialogue, does not give the American student an accurate picture of today's geopolitics. The Model U.N. simulation would seem, rather, to lock the student into the NIEO liberal Western "guilt complex."

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11 "The U.N. and International Human Rights Instruments" (New York: United Nations Association, November 1978), p. 2.

12 Thomas G. Gulick, "For UNESCO: A Failing Grade in Education," Heritage Foundation Backgrounder #221, October 21, 1982, p. 15.

To wit: the U.S. and the Western nations are wealthy because they have "exploited" the natural resources of the Third World. Therefore, the West must expiate its guilt by giving more foreign aid--with no strings attached.

No other view of why the Third World is poor or why the West is economically successful is offered to the Model U.N. student. All he or she gets is an implicit condemnation of the free market system and the idea that the global socialism of the NIEO will rescue the Third World from poverty.

Model U.N. Conferences

This May, Heritage attended the U.S. High School Model United Nations conference, held at the New York Hilton. Participating were 1,700 students from 150 schools. All the hotel conference rooms and ballrooms were abuzz with over twenty U.N. simulations, ranging from the General Assembly to the Commission on Transnational Corporations, from the U.N. High Commissionfor Refugees to regional meetings of NATO and the League of Arab States.

The debate and caliber of students were honor roll level and above. The Director of the General Assembly was a veteran of eight such National High School tournaments. He wielded the gavel, reeled off the parliamentary procedure with a blasé air and reminded the high schoolers of their 1 a.m. curfew. He is nowadays a lawyer, still in his twenties, who likes these Model U.N. meetings and keeps coming back for more. Up to a third of the participants are returnees. When the Model U.N. high schoolers go to college, many return to act as conference officials and moderators. The national conference is as much a social event as it is a Model U.N. conference.

But the U.N. is acted out to the maximum. In the General Assembly, messengers hurry from delegation to delegation. There are endless speeches and caucuses. In the press room, students mimeograph copies of delegate resolutions. On a table is a briefing book from last year's national model U.N. for the "Special Session on the Progress of the New International Economic Order." It advises the high school delegates that, on the question of "Sovereignty over Natural Resources.... The crucial issue...concerns the laws and regulations over transnational corporations which exploit natural resources in a host country." UNA reference materials are available for student delegates in the press room.

UNA does not run the National High School Model U.N., but many of the key officials are former UNA interns or graduates of the UNA Secretariat Seminar. The Director-General this year was Jordan Horvath, UNA's Model U.N. coordinator.

The National Model U.N. for college students draws about 1,400 students from 140 colleges and universities; it was held this year at the New York City Grand Hyatt Hotel. David Bederman, a Princeton student and National Model U.N. veteran, graduate of

the UNA Secretariat Seminar, who was this year's Director-General, observed that about 50 percent of the student delegates received college credit for their participation.

The National Model U.N. conferences for both high school and college students were addressed by U.N. officials. The faculty at the college conference, for instance, heard an address by a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) representative to the U.N. on the subject of Namibia. He was almost as critical of the U.S. and U.S. corporations as he was of South Africa. At the high school meetings, officials from the ILO, UNESCO and WHO talked with faculty members.

The biggest high school Model U.N. conferences are in New York in May, at Georgetown University in February and at Harvard University in December. The biggest college events are the Model U.N. of the Far West in April, the Harvard meeting in February and the national meeting in late spring.

Many Model U.N. faculty advisors remark that it is difficult for delegates to play the role of the United States. According to Dr. Richard Brynildsen, advisor to the Wisconsin-Minnesota Regional Model U.N.: "The students representing countries with opposing views [to the U.S.] adapt extremely well. The role of the U.S. is more difficult, since the Third World and the East Bloc tend to play an aggressive role. The U.S. is on the defensive." Christine Allen of the Oregon High School International Relations League agrees: "The most difficult country to represent is the U.S. It's hard to be the center of all attacks." At the Cleveland World Affairs Council Model U.N., the U.S. is usually poorly represented, according to youth director Maria Campbell, who added that most interest is in countries like Poland, Argentina and the Central American nations.

Model U.N.s and the NIEO

There is considerable pro-NIEO sentiment at the Model U.N.s. At the Philadelphia World Affairs Council Model U.N. this May, keynote speaker Leon Gordeneker of Princeton's Center for International Studies told students and teachers that the NIEO is "economic development to provide for the right to have a decent living." He did not discuss the socialist underpinnings of NIEO and its plan to extract the "decent living" from free world taxpayers. Nor did he discuss the role of corrupt or irresponsible Third World governments in keeping Third World nations poor. In Allendale, Michigan, student Scott Graham, President of the General Assembly in the recent Grand Valley Model U.N., told Heritage he endorsed the NIEO: "The NIEO is a good thing. Where economic inequality exists, so do the increased chances of war." He added that "High school students sympathize with the Third World. Their views haven't been implanted deep enough for them to be pro-U.S. They are more open to other views." Oregon advisor Christine Allen said: "These kids feel there needs to be a redistribution, for example, of [global] wealth and technology."

The reaction of teachers at the Philadelphia World Affairs Model U.N. to the Model U.N. teaching device is probably typical of teacher advisors nation wide. They agreed that the main purpose of the Model U.N. is to educate students concerning current events and diplomacy. The trouble is that the U.N. sees "current events" through its NIEO filter. As for learning the "rudiments of diplomacy," the U.N. is a better laboratory for study of power bloc voting and socialist propaganda tactics than for study of "diplomacy."

The composite picture obtained from more than two dozen Model U.N.s is that the project tends to cast the U.S. as a capitalist villain and the West in general as the exploiter of the Third World. Nationalism, the free market and defense spending are generally associated with exploitation and imperialism at the Model U.N.s. Support for the New International Economic Order and global economic development administered by the U.N. and its agencies is the implicit theme of most Model U.N.s. These are offered to the Model U.N. student as probably "the only way" of solving Third World underdevelopment and the world economic crisis. The very nature of today's U.N. and the Model U.N. policy of replicating the real United Nations as closely as possible naturally lead the student to see the NIEO and the United Nations administration of a NIEO global welfare state as the only solutions to securing peace and ending warfare among the nations.

This is a distorted view of international economics and Third World development. It does not show that the West is already generous with its loans and foreign aid credits. It does not acknowledge the important role of private investment. And it fails to tell students that individual liberty is usually repressed in those countries advocating NIEO.

CONCLUSION

Today's Model United Nations program in the U.S. is uncritical of the United Nations and biased in favor of the NIEO because of the strong influence of UNA, NEA and their affiliates. A balanced program in international affairs for U.S. high school and college students is urgently needed. A healthy alternative to the Model U.N. program that could provide high school and college students with a realistic picture of today's geopolitics would be to conduct a "mock East-West Summit." Students could act out the actual diplomatic battle of the U.S. and its Western allies versus the Soviet Union and its Eastern bloc satellites. Third World countries would be either participants or observers. Pro-Western national liberation movements would be represented as well as Marxist-oriented groups and they could debate each other. Multiple meetings could be held under the Summit Meeting banner on subjects as diverse as defense, education, human rights, global ecology, use of space, natural resources and trade and foreign policy.

The object of the Summit would be to try to conclude a treaty on each subject discussed. Throughout, the East-West ideological conflict would be up front and not buried in the rhetoric of the supposed North-South Dialogue.

As for today's model U.N.s, elected officials, school boards and parents should terminate the United Nations Association's monopoly of Model U.N. teaching materials. Other studies and reference materials should be brought into the classroom to balance the one-sided lesson plans distributed by UNA. How the U.N. is portrayed to young Americans in their schools or at school related programs should concern parents, school officials and particularly every state legislator. They should see to it that American students receive a balanced, critically developed viewpoint of the United Nations--not the anti-Western, pro-NIEO dominant ideology of today's U.N.

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